

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 04871 01 OF 04 121627Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00
INRE-00 (ISO) W

-----109105 122255Z /50

O 121525Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2523

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 4 TEL AVIV 4871

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MPOL, IS, LE

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON - IDISSECTION OF A DILEMMA

1. SUMMARY. ONE MONTH HAS PASSED SINCE THE ISRAELIS
LAUNCHED THEIR ATTACK AGAINST PALESTINIAN STRONG-
HOLDS IN SOUTH LEBANON. THE REALITIES OF THE MILI-
TARY/POLITICAL QUAGMIRE INTO WHICH THEY BLUNDERED
ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY APPARENT. THE GOI
WANTS TO EXTRICATE ITSELF, BUT IN A FASHION WHICH
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 04871 01 OF 04 121627Z

OFFERS SOME EXPECTATION THE OPERATION WILL NOT HAVE
TO BE REPEATED SOON -- UNDER FAR MORE EXPLOSIVE CIR-
CUMSTANCES. THIS MESSAGE IS AN EFFORT TO (1) ANALYZE
THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS LEADING TO THE INVASION;
(2) ASSESS THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY
DILEMMA POSED BY WITHDRAWAL; (3) APPRAISE THE PROSPECTS
OF SUCCESS FOR UNIFIL BUTTRESSED BY AT LEAST A TOKEN

GOL PRESENCE; (4) EXAMINE THE POTENTIAL FOR AN ENHANCED SYRIAN ROLE SOUTH OF THE REF LINE; (5) RECOMMEND SOME SPECIFIC POLICY INITIATIVES THE USG SHOULD UNDERTAKE TO (A) INSURE THE ISRAELIS ARE PROMPTLY REMOVED FROM SOUTH LEBANON (B) ASSIST IN THE EXPANSION OF THE UNIFIL AND THE GOL PRESENCE INTO AN EFFECTIVE BUFFER BETWEEN THE REMAINING PALESTINIANS AND ISRAEL'S NORTHERN FRONTIER. END SUMMARY.

2. FOR THE PAST THREE WEEKS, WE HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH A MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND AN ARMY FACED WITH A COMPLEX DILEMMA AND FRUSTRATED BY NOT KNOWING WHICH WAY TO TURN IN ORDER TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE TATTERED TURF OF SOUTH LEBANON. TO ADD TO THE COMPLEXITY OF THE SITUATION, THE UNIFIL, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THE UN COORDINATOR, HAS ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED, BUT NEVER THOUGHT OUT AS TO POSSIBLE RESPONSES, IF INDEED THERE IS A LOGICAL MILITARY RESPONSE. IT HAS BEEN A MONTH SINCE THE GOI LAUNCHED ITS STRANGE ATTACK INTO SOUTH LEBANON. THE IDF HAS MADE SOME TOKEN WITHDRAWALS, BUT, LIKE THE NEW TELEPHONE TOKENS IN ISRAEL THIS WEEK, THESE WITHDRAWALS ARE ONLY WORTH HALF AS MUCH TODAY AS THEY WERE LAST WEEK. THE PROBLEMS OF TYRE AND THE NEARLY BRIDGE HAVE NOT YET REALLY BEEN ADDRESSED BY UNIFIL, MUCH LESS CONTROLLED. ARMED PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS CONFRONT THE UN WITH IMPUNITY
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 04871 01 OF 04 121627Z

AND THE ISRAELIS LOOK UPON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIFIL CONTROL IN THIS AREA AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THEIR FURTHER WITHDRAWAL. THE LEBANESE HAVE NOT YET RESPONDED WITH A MEANINGFUL PRESENCE IN THE AREA, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THEY SEEM UNABLE TO PUT ONE TOGETHER. THE CHRISTIANS IN THE SOUTH HAVE BECOME FURTHER ESTRANGED FROM THEIR SHIA NEIGHBORS. AND IF, THROUGH SOME STRANGE MIDDLE EAST COINCIDENCE, ALL THE OTHER PROBLEMS ARE SOLVED, THE PROBLEM OF THE "GOOD FENCE" WILL REMAIN. MEANWHILE, PRESSURES FROM THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL GROW Apace AND THE TONE OF EXASPERATION IN NEW YORK RISES MENACINGLY. THERE FOLLOW SOME RECONSTRUCTION OF PAST EVENTS, PLUS SOME THOUGHTS, OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS ABOUT WHAT THE ISRAELIS AND MORE SPECIFICALLY WEIZMAN AND THE IDF ARE THINKING ABOUT THESE DAYS.

3. THE MILITARY DEBATE. IT IS NOW INCREASINGLY APPARENT TO THE PUBLIC HERE THAT SOME CURIOUS DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE TIME OF THE INITIAL ATTACK HELPED PRODUCE THE PRESENT MORASS. WHY DID THE ISRAELIS CHOOSE A VERY LIMITED MILITARY OPTION? WHY DID THEY NOT ATTACK AS THE TERRAIN DICTATES - EAST TO WEST AT THE SAME TIME

MOVING SOUTH TO NORTH, WITH INTENT TO SQUEEZE THE PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS AGAINST THE SEA? WHY DID THEY NOT GO INTO TYRE OR SECURE THE THIRD BRIDGE? WHO WERE THE KEY PLAYERS? WE NOW KNOW FROM HIGHLY RELIABLE SOURCES THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT DEBATE - "A REAL FIGHT" - IN THE IDF GENERAL STAFF. ONE SIDE WAS LEAD BY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS EITAN ARGUING FOR A DECISIVE MILITARY OPTION, INCLUDING GOING INTO TYRE. THE OTHER SIDE, WHICH PRESENTED THE EVENTUAL OPTION OF A LIMITED ATTACK WITH "LIMITED OBJECTIVES," APPEARS NOT TO HAVE BEEN A GROUP AT ALL, BUT RATHER ONE MAN'S OPINION - THE ONE MAN BEING CHIEF OF STAFF GUR. ONE SENIOR GENERAL TOLD COL. WILLIAMS THAT THE POLITICAL DECISION TO ACCEPT THE LIMITED OPTION WAS MADE BASED UPON GUR'S ADVICE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 TEL AV 04871 01 OF 04 121627Z

HIS ARGUMENT INVOLVED SEVERAL POINTS. ONE WAS THAT THE 120,000 REFUGEES WHO DID LEAVE THE AREA WOULD BE BETTER ALLOWED TO GET OUT OF THE WAY OF THE FIGHTING - IMPOSSIBLE IF THE RUTES NORTH HAD BEEN SEALED. (THE COUNTER ARGUMENT WAS THAT THE PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS WERE NOT MUCH INTERMINGLED WITH THE VILLAGERS AND A SEGREGATION OF FRIEND FROM FOE WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.) GUR'S SECOND CONSIDERATION WAS THE REQUIREMENT TO KEEP ISRAELI CASUALTIES AT A MINIMUM. THIS WAS GENERALLY AGREED

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 04871 02 OF 04 121707Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00
INRE-00 (ISO) W

-----049945 172151Z /41

O 121525Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2524

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 4 TEL AVIV 4871

EXDIS

UPON BY THE GENERAL STAFF. HOWEVER, THE EITAN GROUP APPARANTELY BELIEVED THAT THEY COULD, BY GOING INTO TYRE, ELIMINATE A GREAT DEAL OF THE PALESTINIAN CAPABILITY BOTH BY KILLING FIGHTERS AND BY CAPTURING EQUIPMENT WHILE STILL KEEPING THEIR CASUALTY LEVEL ACCEPTABLE. GUR'S THIRD CONSIDERATION, AND ONE WHICH HE ARGUED VERY STRONGLY, WAS THE IMPACT ON WORLD OPINION THAT WOULD BE EXPERIENCED IF ISRAELI TROOPS WENT DIRECTLY INTO TYRE. HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE MADE REMARKS ABOUT SEEING BODIES OF PALESTINIANS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 04871 02 OF 04 121707Z

SPREAD ALL OVER THE FRONT PAGES OF THE WORLD AND APPARENTLY SAID THAT THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT ISRAEL DIDN'T NEED. THE OBVIOUS IRONY IS THAT THE APPROVED BOMB STRIKE AGAINST AREAS SOUTH OF BEIRUT PRODUCED EXACTLY THIS SAME TYPE OF PICTURE. IT APPEARS THAT THE BOMBING DECISIONS WERE HASTILY MADE AND NO ONE NOW WANTS TO ADMIT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM- THOUGH THEY SEEM MOST DIRECTLY THE RESULT OF THE EMOTIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR SOME DIRECT RETALIATION AGAINST THE PLACES FROM WHICH THE ISRAELIS BELIEVED THE MARCH 11 TERRORIST ATTACK HAD ORIGINATED.

4. DECISION MAKING, ISRAELI STYLE. WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO RECONSTRUCT THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS WHICH PRECEDED THE MARCH 15 ATTACK AS WE BELIEVE THE SAME, MESSY PROCESS MAY BE FOLLOWED CONCERNING WITHDRAWAL. IT APPEARS THAT THE MILITARY PLANNERS DO THEIR THING AND PRESENT THE OPTIONS TO GUR (OR TO THE NEW COS EITAN AFTER THIS WEEK) WHO THEN GOES TO WEIZMAN. GUR PROBABLY PRESENTS ALL THE OPTIONS DEVELOPED, BUT OBVIOUSLY SUPPORTS HIS CHOICE MORE STRONGLY THAN THE OTHERS. THE NEXT STEP IS FUZZY. WEIZMAN AND GUR GO TO BEGIN WITH WHAT WE BELIEVE IS MORE A DECISION THAN A RECOMMENDATION, AND PRESENT IT IN SUCH A MANNER THAT BEGIN BLESSES IT

RATHER THAN APPROVES IT, ALTHOUGH WE ARE CONFIDENT HE BELIEVES HE IS APPROVING. IN THE CASE OF THE INITIAL ATTACK, AT LEAST THE INNER CORE OF THE CABINET WAS CONSULTED-AND DAYAN SEEMS TO HAVE ARGUED AGAINST THE DECISION BUT TO HAVE BEEN OVERRULED AT LEAST THAT IS WHAT HE WOULD LIKE US TO BELIEVE. THE LATER DECISION TO GO ON TO THE LITANI WAS MADE STRICTLY IN THE GUR-WEIZMAN-BEGIN CHANNEL; SHARON AND OTHER CABINET MEMBERS HAVE SINCE SHARPLY CRITICIZED

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 04871 02 OF 04 121707Z

WEIZMAN FOR NOT CONSULTING EVEN WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CABINET'S DEFENSE COMMITTEE. AT NO TIME DOES THERE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN MUCH IF ANY POLITICO/DIPLOMATIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, NOR ANY REAL THOUGHT GIVEN TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL'S PROBABLE ACTIONS--MUCH LESS ANY ANTICIPATION THAT A UN FORCE WOULD BE DEPLOYED. ONCE OVERRULED, DAYAN SEEMS TO HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM THE FRAY AND HAS TRIED OSTENTATIVELY TO WASH HIS HANDS OF THE WHOLE LEBANESE MESS. THIS HAS HAD THE COROLLARY RESULT OF DEPRIVING BEGIN AND WEIZMAN OF ANY OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S UN EXPERIENCE, AT LEAST UNTIL A DAY OR TWO AGO.

5. HOW TO GET OUT. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE PROBLEMS OF WITHDRAWAL AT LENGTH WITH VARIOUS LEVELS OF THE IDF, THE DEFENSE MINISTRY, AND RECENTLY WITH EVRON AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. (DAYAN CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO DISCUSS SOUTH LEBANON.) ALL ARE NOW WELL AWARE OF THE PRESSURES BEING EXERTED UPON THEM BY BOTH THE USG AND BY WORLD OPINION, YET FEEL, IN WHAT MAY BE DESCRIBED AS A TYPICAL ISRAELI REACTION, THAT INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO DICTATE THE DECISION. NOR CAN THEY ACCEPT THE PROPOSITION THAT THE STATUS QUO ANTE WILL BE ALLOWED TO RECUR WITHIN A FEW WEEKS. OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH BEGIN, WEIZMAN, GUR, EVRON, AND SHARONI (DEPUTY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS) CONVINCED US THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE NOW GENUINELY ANXIOUS TO LEAVE SOUTHERN LEBANON DESPITE SOME WEAK NOISES ABOUT "WHAT'S THE HURRY?" THEY NOW REALIZE THAT EVERY EXTRA DAY THAT PASSES WILL ONLY ERODE THEIR POSITION. THEY STILL HOPE TO OBTAIN SOME SORT OF ASSURANCES THAT THEIR DEPARTURE WILL NOT CREATE A VACUUM, PARTICULARLY AROUND TYRE. THEY ALSO NEED A GOOD COVER STORY TO PRESENT TO THE ISRAELI PUBLIC, JUSTIFYING TOTAL WITHDRAWAL IN A SITUATION WHERE THE GRANDIOSE OBJECTIVES CLAIMED FOR THIS OPERATION MANI-

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 TEL AV 04871 02 OF 04 121707Z

FESTLY WILL NOT BE MET. THEY HOPE FOR SOME KIND OF DE FACTO AGREEMENT ON THREE ELEMENTS: (1) A STRENGTHENING OF THE UNIFIL, ESPECIALLY IN THE WESTERN SECTOR, WHICH RESULTS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONTROL OVER THE BRIDGE AND MOVES PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS OUT OF TYRE ITSELF AND BACK INTO THE CAMPS. (2) A LEBANESE PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON. THIS MUST INCLUDE A WILLINGNESS TO ABSORB HADDAD INTO THE LEBANESE ARMY AND SOME ARRANGEMENT FOR THE CONTINUATION OF "GOOD FENCES." (WE WILL ADDRESS THIS DIFFICULT SUBJECT--THE FUTURE OF THE GOOD FENCES--IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE.) (3) AT LEAST A TACIT UNDERSTANDING THAT AFTER THEY WITHDRAW THE SYRIANS WILL MOVE SOUTH TOWARD, IF NOT TO, THE LITANI AND WILL ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER PALESTINIANS BETWEEN THE RIVER AND THE PRESENT ADF LINES.

6. STRENGTHENING OF UNIFIL. SIILASVUO IS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD THE ISRAELIS THAT THE CURRENT STRENGTH OF THE FRENCH FORCES IN THE WESTERN SECOTR IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO ESTABLISH THE DESIRED LEVEL OF CONROL NOR TO RESTRICT PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT OF BOTH MEN AND SUPPLIES ACROSS THE BRIDGE. HE HAS ALSO APPARENTLY TOLD GUR THAT HE REQUIRES AN ADDITIONAL TWO FRENCH BATTALIONS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE UNIFIL WITH A CHANCE FOR SUCCESS. ADDITIONALLY, THE IDF HAS THE DEFINITE IMPRESSION SIILASVUO BELIEVES

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 04871 03 OF 04 121655Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00

CIAE-00 (ISO) W

-----049964 172152Z /50

O 121525Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2525

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 4 TEL AVIV 4871

EXDIS

THAT HIS MANDATE IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO FORCE THE
PALESTINIANS TO DISARM THEIR FIGHTERS. A POSSIBLE
SOLUTION FOR TYRE IS ONE WHERE THE PALESTINIANS ARE
FORCED TO STOP PARADING AROUND TYRE WITH THEIR WEAPONS,
STOP CROSSING THE BRIDGE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES,
AND NOVE THOSE WEAPONS THAT THEY CURRENTLY HAVE INTO
CACHES INSIDE THE CAMPS. THE ISRAELIS WILL KNOW, JUST
AS WILL THE UN, THAT THOSE WEAPONS ARE IN THE CAMPS,
BUT WE BELIEVE THE ISRAELIS WOULD RELUCTANTLY
ACCEPT THIS RESULT AS THE MOST THEY COULD EXPECT FROM
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 04871 03 OF 04 121655Z

UNIFIL, AND AS MINIMALLY ADEQUATE FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL
PURPOSES HERE.

7. THE TYRE SITUATION. WHAT THE SRAELIS ENVISION IS A CORDON OF
UN TROOPS AROUND TYRE, FILTERING ENTRY INTO SOUTHERN
LEBANON AND TAKING ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES TO KEEP ADDI-
TIONAL PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS OUT. PRIVATELY THEY ADMIT
THAT EVEN WITH A SITUATION SUCH AS THAT DESCRIBED ABOVE,
THERE WILL BE SOME INFILTRATION BUT THEY BELIEVE
THE LEVEL WOULD NOT BE SUCH THAT A SIGNIFICANT
THREAT WOULD BE POSED TO EITHER ISRAEL ITSELF OR THE
CHRISTIANS. THE QUESTION THEY POSE IS WHETHER SIILASVUO
HAS THE NECESSARY MANDATE TO DO THIS, AND WHETHER HE
WILL BE GIVEN THE ADDITIONAL FORCES HE BELIEVES ARE
REQUIRED.

8. A LEBANESE PRESENCE IN THE SOUTH. THE NEXT
COMPONENT IS THE MOVEMENT OF SOME LEBANESE FORCES INTO
SOUTHERN LEBANON ACCOMPANIED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
GOL. THE MAN ISSUE, AS VIEWED BY THE ISRAELIS, IS
TO ESTABLISH A LEBANESE AUTHORITY WHICH INCLUDES THE
ABSORPTION OF HADDAD INTO THE LEBANESE ARMY. GUR
DOES NOT CONSIDER THAT HADDAD'S ATTEMPT TO RAISE A SHIA
MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN ARMY IN THE AREA WILL HAVE ANY REAL
SUCCESS. SHARONI HAS TOLD US THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE

DISCOVERED THAT THERE IS NO POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE SHIA VILLAGES AND THAT YOUNG PEOPLE --"SURPRISINGLY LEFTIST"--HAVE TAKEN OVER THE ROLES PREVIOUSLY PLAYED BY THE VILLAGE ELDERS. HE ALSO SAYS THAT THEYOUNG SHIAS ARE MORE WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH THE PALESTINIANS THAN WERE THE ELDERS, BUT THAT BASICALLY THEY ARE ALL APATHETIC AND THEIR ONLY REAL DESIRE AT THIS TIME IS TO BE LEFT ALONE. THUS SOME WAY MUST BE FOUND TO ESTABLISH
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 04871 03 OF 04 121655Z

A DEGREE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY WHICH WILL PREVENT CHRISTIANS ATTACKING SHIAS AND VICE VERSA, AND ONE WHICH MINIMIZES PALESTINIAN REENTRY INTO THE VILLAGES.

9. ISRAEL AS PROTECTOR. THE OTHER PART OF THIS EQUATION IS THE CONSISTENT ISRAELI STATEMENT AND INDEED BELIEF THAT THEY NOW ACQUIRED A "MORAL AND HONORABLE RESPONSIBILITY" FOR THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN LEBANON. PREVIOUS STATEMENTS HAVE FOCUSED PRIMARILY UPON THEIR SUPPORT OF CHRISTIANS, HOWEVER MORE RECENT REMARKS INCLUDE THE SHIA. GUR HAS MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF ISRAEL'S FORMING A SHIA MILITIA DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN SOME DEGREE OF AUTHORITY IN THE NON-CHRISTIAN AREAS. IF THEY GO THROUGH WITH THIS PLAN IT WILL MEAN ANOTHER GROUP TO BE ABSORBED INTO EITHER THE ARMY OR THE GENDARMES, FURTHER COMPLICATING THE ENTIRE SITUATION.

10. SYRIA'S ROLE. THE LAST COMPONENT INVOLVES THE SYRIANS. WEIZMAN AND OTHER ISRAELIS ARE NOW HINTING VERY BROADLY THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO FORGET OR AT LEAST TO MODIFY THEIR PREVIOUS OPPOSITION TO MOVEMENT OF SYRIAN FORCES SOUTH OF THE "RED LINE" AND TO ACCEPT SUCH A PRESENCE DOWN TO THE LITANI. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE STRESSED THIS POINT, THEY HAVE HAD SOME DIFFICULTY ACCEPTING OR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE SYRIANS, IF THEY EVER WOULD MAKE SUCH A MOVE, CERTAINLY WOULD NOT DO IT UNTIL AFTER ISRAELI FORCES HAVE WITHDRAWN. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, HAD WEAK SIGNALS FROM SHARONI AND WEIZMAN THAT A PRIVATE WORD FROM THE SYRIANS THAT THEY WOULD INDEED MOVE DOWN AND WOULD ATTEMPT TO CONTROL PALESTINIANS IN THE AREA NORTH OF THE LITANI COULD ASSIST IN THE ISRAELI DECISION TO WITHDRAW QUICKLY. ASSAD OF COURSE WOULD BE FACED WITH A REQUIREMENT FOR SOME COVER TO PRECLUDE ANY INDICATION THAT HIS MOVE HAD BEEN WORKED OUT WITH THE ISRAELIS. ONE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 TEL AV 04871 03 OF 04 121655Z

POSSIBILITY WOULD BE FOR SARKIS TO ORDER THE OVE OF
THE ADF SOUTH, WHICH FITS WITH ASSAD'S PREVIOUS STATE-
MENTS THAT THE FORCE IN LEBANON IS NOT SYRIAN BUT
RATHER ADF AND IS UNDER THE ORDERS OF SARKIS, NOT THE
SYRIAN HIGH COMMAND.

11. CONCLUSIONS. THIS WEEK WE ARE AT A CROSSROADS. THE ISRAELIS
ARE STARTING TO PULL INTO THEIR SHELLS IN THE FACE
OF US PRESSURE TO WITHDRAW, UN SECURITY COUNCIL
PRESSURES, OUR DIPLOMATIC DEMARCHES AND LETTERS
TO CONGRESS ABOUT THE IMPROPER USE OF FMS SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT
THE UNSATISFACTORY OUTCOME OF BEGIN'S RECENT MEETINGS
IN WASHINGTON, THE AIRCRAFT SALES "PACKAGE," AND WHAT
SOME PERCEIVE AS A WEAKENING OF THE TOTAL US COMMITMENT
TO ISRAEL. WEIZMAN IS HOLDING TOO MUCH OF THE BAG WITH
BOTH THE EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATIONS AND SOUTH LEBANON AS WELL
AS HIS MINISTRY. HE DESPERATELY WANTS TO GET RID OF
THE SOUTH LEBANON ALBATROSS AND TO CONCENTRATE ON THE
MINISTRY AND THE NEGOTIATIONS. BUT THE DEBATE IN NEW YORK HAS
AN UNREAL QUALITY ABOUT IT. THE KEY PROBLEM IS NOT TO OBTAIN
AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL COMMITMENT; THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN.
THE CENTRAL ISSUE IS HOW CAN UNIFIL AND THE GOL PROVIDE
QUICLY MORE EFFECTIVE POLITICAL COVER FOR THAT WITH-
DRAWAL TO TAKE PLACE. WHETHER THE INVASION WAS JUSTIFIED

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 04871 04 OF 04 121637Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00
INRE-00 (ISO) W
-----109206 122306Z /50

O 121525Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2526
AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

S E C R E T SECTION 4 OF 4 TEL AVIV 4871

EXDIS

OR NOT, OR WISE OR NOT, IT WAS HARDLY UNPROVOKED.
ITS PURPOSE WAS TO "CLEAN OUT" THE BASES FOR A REAL AND
CONTINUING PLO MILITARY THREAT TO ISRAEL, NOT TO OCCUPY
LEBANESE SOIL AND EXPAND ISRAEL'S BOUNDARIES. HAVING
TAKEN THIS STEP, THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT, OR ANY DEMO-
CRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT, MUST WITHDRAW IN A WAY
WHICH GIVES SOME COLOR OF CREDIBILITY TO THE ARGUMENT
THAT THE OPERATION WILL NOT HAVE TO BE REPEATED SOON -
UNDER FAR MORE EXPLOSIVE CIRCUMSTANCES.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 04871 04 OF 04 121637Z

12. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS. BASED ON THESE CONSIDERATIONS,
I BELIEVE WE MUST REDOUBLE OUR EFFORTS WITH THE
ISRAELIS TO OBTAIN A FIRM TIMETABLE FOR EARLY AND TOTAL
WITHDRAWAL. BUT THIS EFFORT SHOULD BE MATCHED BY AN
EQUAL EFFORT IN JERUSALEM, NEW YORK, BEIRUT AND
OTHER CAPITALS TO : (1) INDUCE THE UN TO ORGANIZE WITH
GREATER URGENCY AND EFFICIENCY THE DISPATCH OF
UNIFIL UNITS TO SOUTH LEBANON. WE SHOULD TAKE THE
LEAD IN AN EFFORT TO EXPAND UNIFIL TO 6,000. WE
SHOULD LEAN HARD ON THE FRENCH AND NORWEGIANS
IN PARTICULAR. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE SIILASVUO
IN HIS COORDINATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS. (2)
WORK FOR A BETTER LEBANESE PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH,
AND FIND SOME WAY TO GET HADDAD OUT OF THE PICTURE.
(A YEAR IN PARIS? OR ALABAMA?) INCREASE THE PRESSURE
ON SARKIS AND BOUTROS TO MOVE AT LEAST TOKEN
LEBANESE ARMY UNITS TO THE SOUTH. (3) STEP UP EFFORTS
TO OBTAIN MORE COOPERATION FROM THE SYRIANS, AND THROUGH
THEM THE PLO. THESE EFFORTS SHOULD FOCUS ON THE PLO
ROLE IN TYRE IN PARTICULAR, AND ADHERENCE TO THE CEASE-
FIRE THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH IN GENERAL. (4) PROBE THE
POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING A CLEAR THOUGH PRIVATE
SYRIAN PLEDGE TO MOVE SOUTH TO THE LITANI ONCE ISRAELI
WITHDRAWAL IS COMPLETE OR PRACTICALLY SO, PERHAPS BY
PRESSING SARKIS TO APPROACH THE SYRIANS WITH A SUGGESTION
THAT HE ORDER THE MOVE AS THE NOMINAL COMMANDER OF THE
ADF.

13. SOME OF THESE EFFORTS ARE ALREADY UNDERWAY. BUT
I CANNOT STRESS ENOUGH THAT WE MUST DO MUCH MORE IN
THE DAYS AHEAD THAN MERELY LEAN HARD ON THE ISRAELIS. THEY
WANT TO GET OUT QUICKLY. BUT THEY DO NOT YET KNOW HOW.

LEWIS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 04871 04 OF 04 121637Z

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV04871
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780163-0340
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780463/aaaacbdc.tel
Line Count: 560
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 27023ab1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 11
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2986789
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH LEBANON - IDISSECTION OF A DILEMMA
TAGS: MOPS, MPOL, IS, LE
To: STATE AMMAN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/27023ab1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014